

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the Abstract on page 70 with the following paragraph:

The present invention relates to compositions and methods for the detection and characterization of interfering RNAs such as micro RNAs (miRNAs) and small interfering RNAs (siRNAs) and other short nucleic acid molecules. More particularly, the present invention relates to ~~improved~~ methods for the detection and quantitation of interfering RNA expression. The present invention further provides for the detection of variants and types of miRNAs and siRNAs.